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Newsletter 88 • February – March 2010

Cambridge CYCLING Campaign

Cambridge Cycling Campaign

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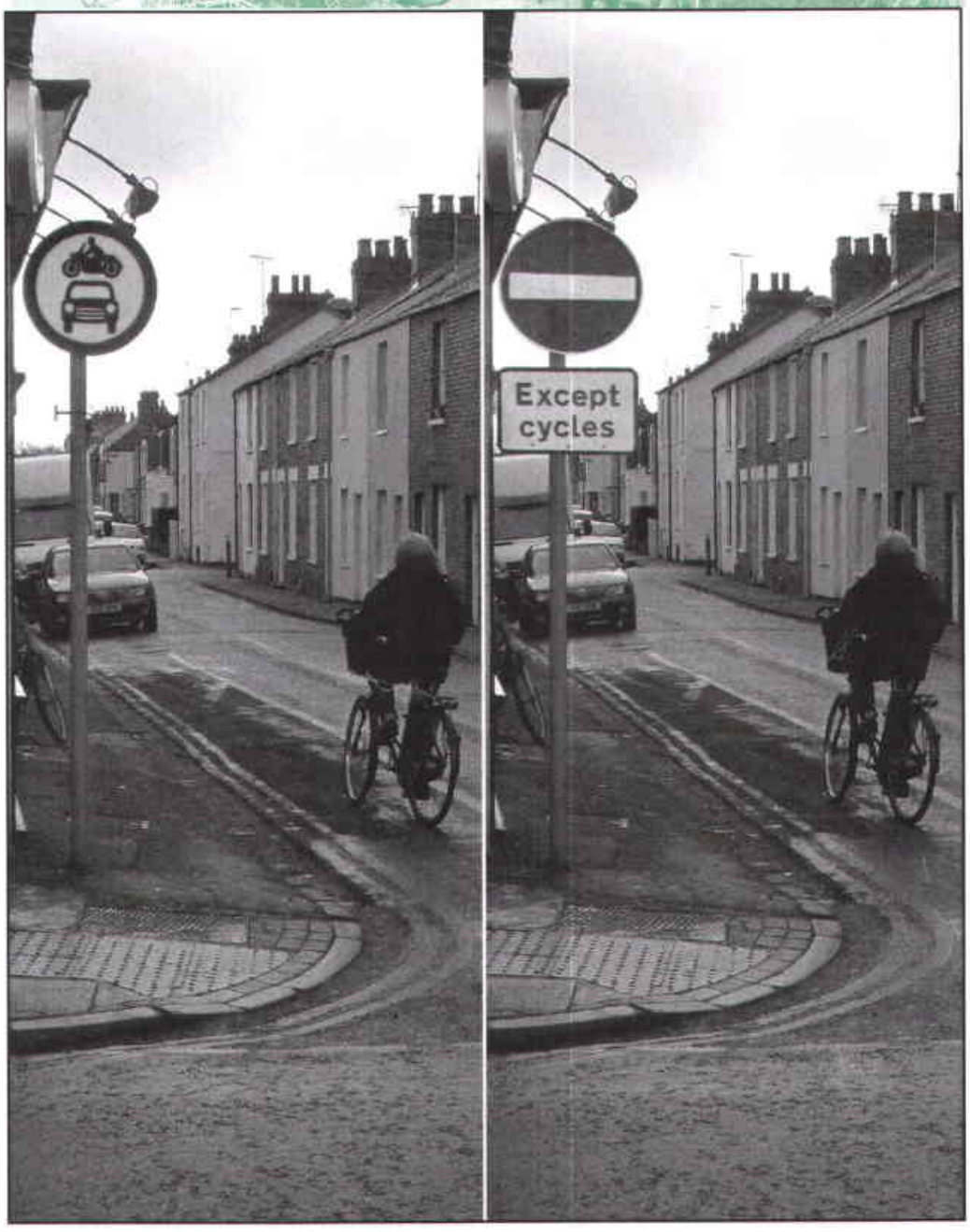

Spot the difference

At long last Cambridge receives a clear sign that the Council supports two-way access for cyclists. New signs will go up in the spring – the photo on the right is a mock-up.

Cambridge CYCLING Campaign

If you like what you see in this newsletter, add your voice to those of our 1000 members by joining the Campaign.

Membership costs are low:

£7.50 individual
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£12 household.

For this, you get six newsletters a year, discounts at a large number of bike shops, and you will be supporting our work.

Join now on-line at:
www.camcycle.org.uk/membership.

Please get in touch if you want to hear more.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign was set up in 1995 to voice the concerns of cyclists. We are not a cycling club, but an organisation for lobbying and campaigning for the rights of cyclists, and for promoting cycling in and around Cambridge.

Don't forget our meetings, open to all, are on the first Tuesday of each month, 7.30 for 8.00pm at the Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane, Cambridge.

Elected Officers 2009-2010

Co-ordinator – Martin Lucas-Smith

Liaison Officer – Jim Chisholm

Membership Secretary – David Earl

Newsletter Editor – Monica Frisch

Treasurer – Clare Macrae

Events Officer – Simon Nuttall

Recruitment Officer – John Cooter

Press and Publicity Officer – Sally Guyer

Officers Without Portfolio – Chris Dorling, Robin Heydon, Vanessa Kelly, Phil Lee, Adam Pogonowski, Paul Robison and James Woodburn

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Co-ordinator's comment

The County Council should take notes from the Dutch (cycleway, left, photographed by David Hembrow) and grit Cambridge's main cycle routes (Riverside, right) in snowy weather.

DfT finally gives in

At long last, after years of campaigning by cycling groups all around the country – not least ourselves – the Department for Transport is finally allowing the use of an 'Except Cycles' plate under a 'No Entry' sign, albeit on a trial basis in a few locations.

This signage combination is used widely on the continent and is simply common sense. It says what it means, and no motorist could be excused for driving through it.

The current 'flying motorcycles' sign has been the only way to sign this arrangement when the street entry point is too narrow for a buildout (yet wide enough for two-way cycling). But this really is an abuse of that sign.

Predictably, when the Cambridge News reported this news, some commentators on their website used this as an excuse to complain that cyclists shouldn't be given contraflow rights. But they completely miss the point: nothing is changing in that regard – merely that the existing signage is being clarified.

Allegedly, a single civil servant at the Department for Transport has for many years single-handedly prevented this new, sensible signage – but has now retired. We have no doubt the trail will be a success, and this signage will replace the 'No Motor Vehicles' sign.

Gritting

Well, it happened again. Cyclists have once more been treated as second-class citizens when it comes to gritting of paths.

The County Council has admittedly been in a difficult position: salt stocks around the country have been limited, and there have been multiple rounds of snowfall, making it difficult to keep paths clear. But what is necessary is a clear statement that cycles are regarded as as important as cars when it comes to gritting main routes – and that what is a local street for cars is sometimes a main road for cyclists.

Cambridge On Ice

As I write, the Cambridge On Ice event on Parker's Piece is wrapping up its operations for a third year. We feel its co-existence with a major cycling and walking route has worked much better this year, and the organisers are to be thanked.

Hopefully the organisers have now found that the suggestions which we originally made three years ago – all sensible compromises that the City Council this year insisted on in the planning consent – have not proved troublesome to the event's operations. This year we received only a few complaints from our members, mostly about a few occasions when the path has been blocked by a delivery lorry, and we decided not to pursue these.

Paths like those across Parker's Piece are key routes for cyclists and walkers, as has been the case for a very, very long time. We are happy to share them. Like everyone else, a spirit of compromise is needed – with cyclists travelling at moderated speeds and giving way to walkers, and temporary events recognising these more mundane daily uses.

Thankfully this year, that spirit of compromise has been evident. Assuming the same planning conditions can be retained in the future, there should be no need to object next time around.

Martin Lucas-Smith, Co-ordinator

No Entry except cycles

Cycle campaigners gathered in Mawson Road to celebrate the trial of No Entry Except Cycles signs in the road. This is one of the Cycling Demonstration Town projects and is something the Cycling Campaign (as well as others) have called for for a long time now. The new signs should be in place by March this year.

Pictured, are Nichola Harrison (County Councillor for Petersfield) and David Howarth MP (both centre) and (from left to right) Cambridge Cycle Campaign members Robin Heydon, Simon Nuttall, Jim Chisholm and Bev Nicolson.

STOP PRESS

Fashion cycle ride

The **RIDE FOR JOY** (redefining joyriding) on 20th March 2010 is a cycle event aimed at, but not exclusively for, women and girls. The idea is to encourage more women and girls to take up cycling as their preferred method of transport in their daily lives by getting those who do currently cycle to join us on a fun ride around the city centre, dressed up (or down) as stylishly as you please. See the blog Copenhagen Cycling Chic (www.copenhagencyclechic.com) for inspiration.

Sally Guyer

What's a PCSO?

Chris Wiseman and Gary Kendall, PSCOs based at Sawston police station, explain what they do.

Hello All,

We would like to introduce ourselves. We are Chris Wiseman and Gary Kendall, your local Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). If you are registered on e-cops or visit our regular surgeries you will know us. If not come and introduce yourself if you see us walking round the streets. Our powers allow us to deal with low-level crime and antisocial behaviour. We are also very aware of the dangers faced by cyclists, especially at this time of year. We give talks in schools on cycle safety and often give advice to people we see cycling, for instance, without lights or wearing inadequate 'hi-vis' clothing. Of course, your biggest problem is inconsiderate motorists and drivers of large vehicles who cannot always see you (right). We often receive reports of this kind of thing. Obviously we cannot always follow them up, especially if we do not have enough information. However if you do feel intimidated and there is a certain area where this is most likely to happen, it is worth telling us and we will monitor the situation for you.

If you would like more information about e-cops please email the address below.

Chris and Gary

Chris Wiseman
PCSO 7256
chris.wiseman@cambs.pnn.police.uk

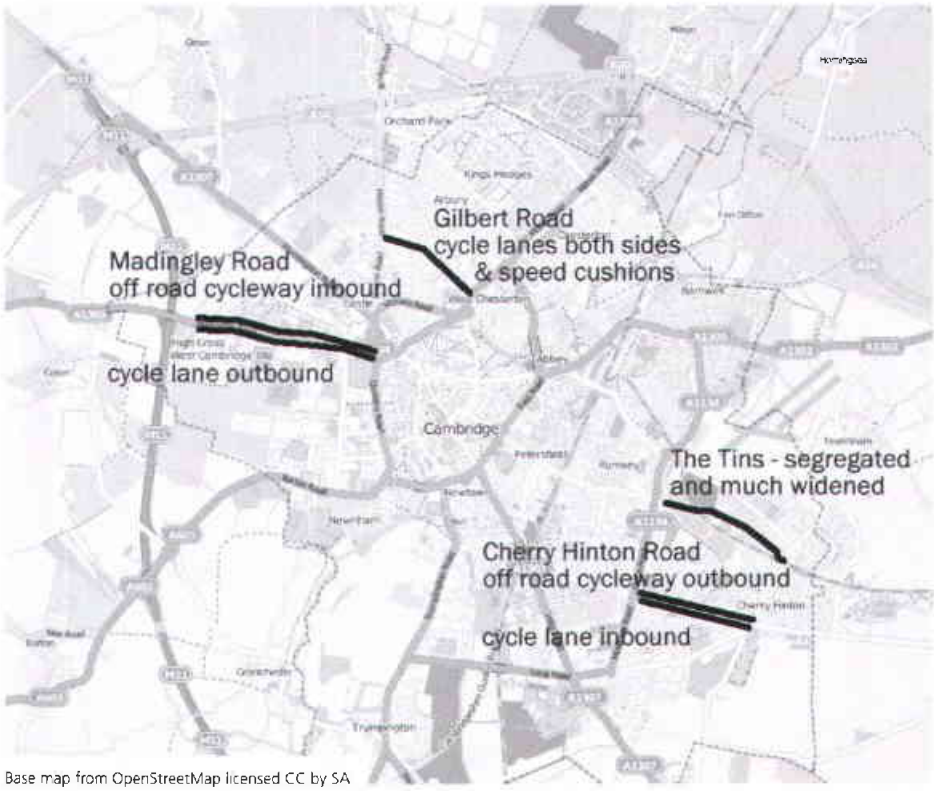
Next tranche of Cycle Cambridge schemes

As early work gets underway on the village connections, the Cycle Cambridge project team is now consulting on plans for in-city routes along Cherry Hinton Road, Gilbert Road, Madingley Road and The Tins.

The aim of the Cycle Cambridge project is to provide much higher quality facilities especially to attract new cyclists. In these proposals, the off-road parts are much wider than we have typically seen before, which makes them much better quality.

One of the persistent complaints we have had about such facilities is the ubiquitous Give Ways at side roads, however minor. These new off-road sections take what the engineers see as a brave step by providing cycle priority at most side roads, a feature we strongly welcome. The deviations from the straight line that some of these introduce is excessive, though. Continental examples don't do this: they force the turning traffic to wait in the main road before turning.

Nevertheless, as a first step in this direction, this is an excellent development and particularly on Madingley Road may well provide a facility which both the target market and nearly all existing cyclists would be happy using.



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These new off-road sections provide cycle priority at most side roads, a feature we strongly welcome

Cherry Hinton Road

Plans released so far only address the eastern end of Cherry Hinton Road from the Perne Road roundabout (which is a significant and largely unaddressed obstacle in its own right) to the Robin Hood junction at Cherry Hinton.

The proposal is for:

- A 1.5 m on-road cycle lane westbound (which, at long last, will link up properly with the run-in to the Perne Road roundabout). The lane is shown extending across all the junctions but for some reason doesn't start right at the eastern end.
- An off-road shared-use route along the line of the existing shared-use path, but properly constructed as a cycleway and, notably, with cycle priority at many of the junctions. Sadly this involves a wiggle at each junction, with a particularly large deviation at Walpole Road, but it is inevitable that this first significant use of cycleway priority over side roads will be a cautious one. The cycleway extends around the corner at the Perne Road roundabout, allowing cyclists coming from the north to avoid the roundabout.

The existing off-road cycle path along Cherry Hinton Road will be properly constructed as a cycleway with cycle priority at many of the junctions.

At the Cherry Hinton end, the path just ends. As at present, there is no way to continue straight on towards Fulbourn (especially as there is a left-turn lane on the road here), and there isn't a proper merge into the road to Cherry Hinton. This needs further thought.

The Tins

This is the well-used path that starts almost opposite the out-of-town end of Mill Road (actually Brookfields at that point), crosses the railway and ends up in Cherry Hinton by the level crossing, with an exit onto Coldham's Lane after the sports centre and hotel complex.

Alongside the Holiday Inn and David Lloyd gym is one of the better cycleways in Cambridge, improved as a side effect of those developments. The area is the site of an old cement works (still working when I came to Cambridge in 1984). The remainder of The Tins (so-called because it was, years ago, lined with corrugated iron fencing) is blighted by tree roots which break up the surface, though recent remedial work has improved this tremendously.

The proposal here is still rather tentative as it involves buying land to widen the route.

The well-used Tins path already includes one of the better cycleways in Cambridge

The last few metres up to the railway bridge on The Tins are too steep and it's a shame there is no proposal to address this.

The option being consulted on provides partly for a 2.5 m off-road cycleway and a separate 1.8 m footway, and in other sections a combined segregated cycleway 4 m wide and footway alongside. There would be a decent width bridge at the Brookfields end to replace the tiny structure there now. In some places the cycleway will be separate from the footway, and in others will run alongside it like a road. For comparison, this is a little wider than the bridge at the railway station.

East of the sports centre, the really narrow path through to Orchard Estate will be widened to 4 m, divided between cycles and pedestrians.

The proposal for The Tins is still rather tentative as it involves buying land

This will undoubtedly be a major improvement. There are some notable omissions though:

- Although the bridge is part of the railway and cannot be widened, it is a shame that there is no proposal to lessen the steepness of the ramps, especially on the City side, and to widen and improve the visibility on the sharp bend on the Cherry Hinton side (the existing wide cycleway stops short before this bend);
- The proposals stop at Orchard Estate: there needs to be continuity across this side road with the path on the other side: ideally a cycle priority crossing (the road carries an insignificant amount of traffic);
- There is nothing proposed to improve the access out onto Coldham's Lane (it is mainly levelling and tidying up that are needed).

Gilbert Road

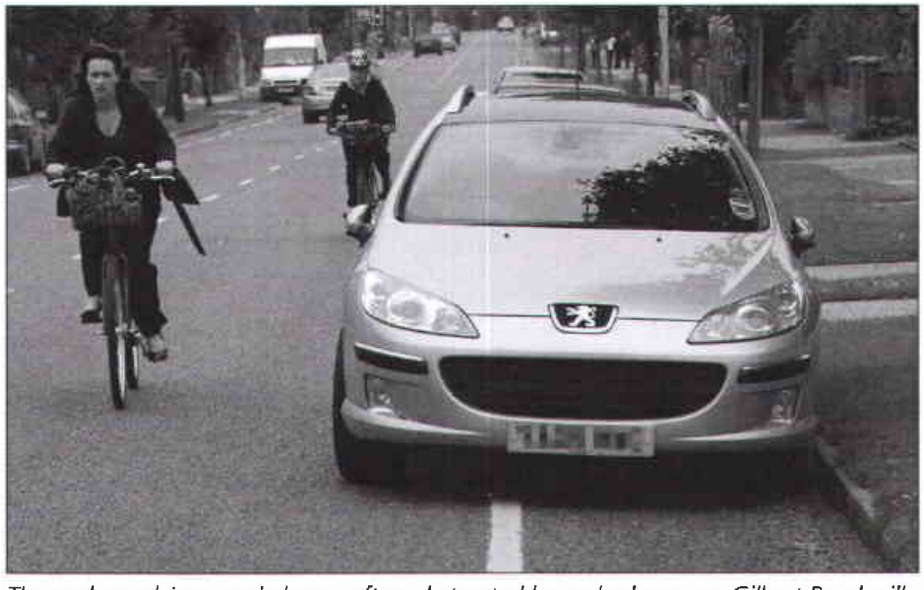
Gilbert Road is a fairly busy link between Histon Road and Milton Road. It currently has useless advisory cycle lanes: they are universally used for parking. Two options are offered, both of which involve removing all car parking, adding moderately wide cycle lanes which are enforceable, and introducing traffic-calming speed cushions in the remaining roadway:

- 1.7 m advisory lanes with double yellow lines (though loading would be allowed, and vehicles can legally enter them, e.g. to get past right-turning traffic – though most motorists don't know the difference between these and mandatory lanes);
- 1.5 m mandatory lanes (no vehicles are allowed in these at any time, except for access to property).

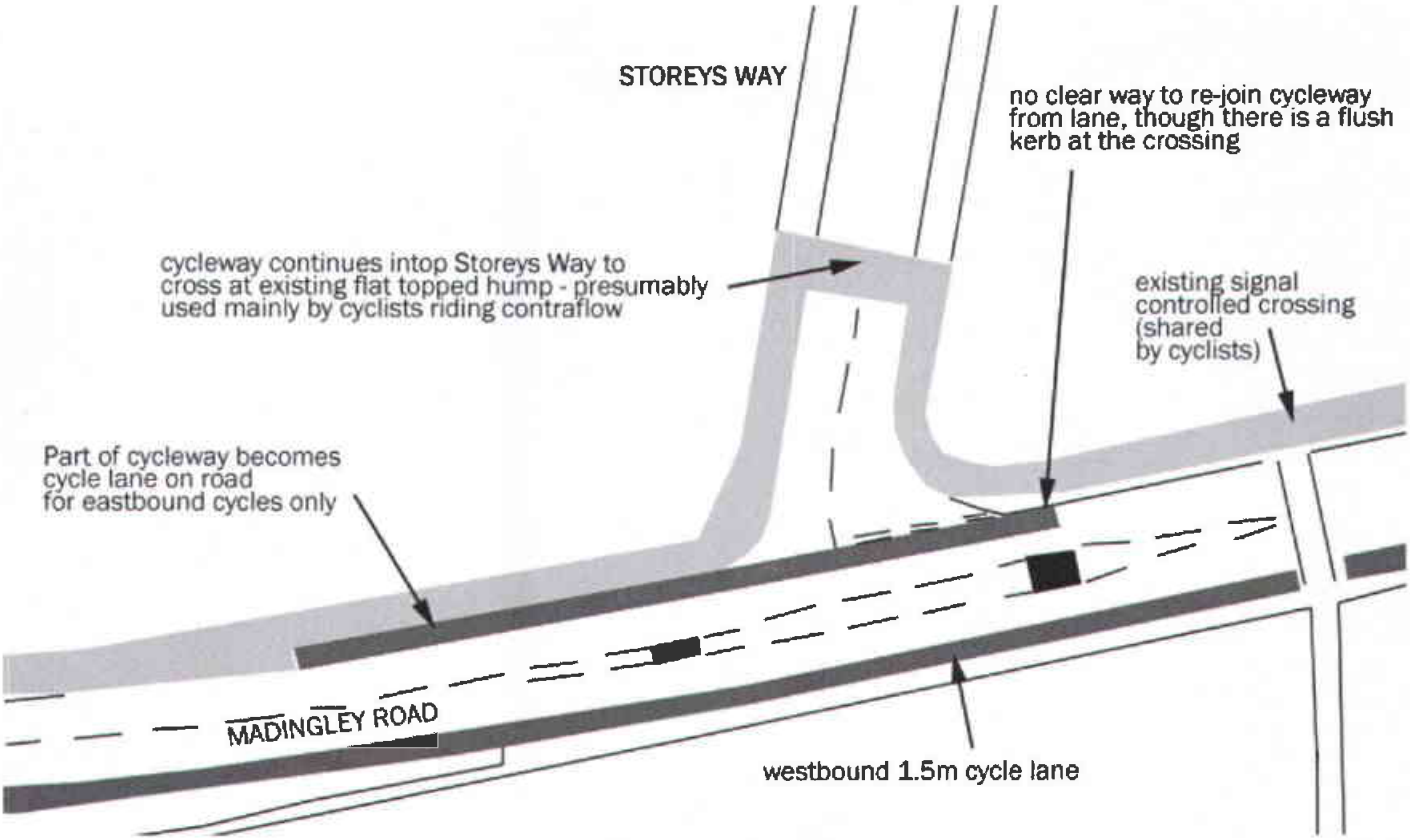
The wider lanes seem like a no-brainer to us, but the attraction of the poorer cycling option for residents is that they would be able to park on the grass verges. All but a very, very few houses have off-road parking, and that's not what verges are for. We are astonished the Council is even considering this option.

Both options for Gilbert Road involve removing all car parking and adding moderately wide cycle lanes

We should remember that 1.5 m (as also proposed in-bound on Cherry Hinton Road), though wide by Cambridge standards (Coldham's Lane, for example, has more typical 1.2 m lanes), are still right at the bottom limit of acceptability, the minimum provided for by national standards, so neither option here is particularly adventurous.



The useless advisory cycle lanes, often obstructed by parked cars, on Gilbert Road will be replaced with moderately wide enforceable cycle lanes (1.5 or 1.7 m).


STOREYS WAY
no clear way to re-join cycleway from lane, though there is a flush kerb at the crossing
cycleway continues intop Storeys Way to cross at existing flat topped hump - presumably used mainly by cyclists riding contraflow
existing signal controlled crossing (shared by cyclists)
Part of cycleway becomes cycle lane on road for eastbound cycles only
MADINGLEY ROAD
westbound 1.5m cycle lane

Madingley Road

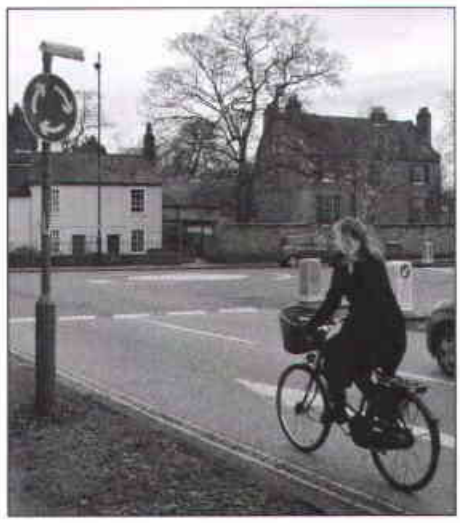
The message here is one of improving the abysmal current provision.

Eastbound, from the Park & Ride site, we start off into town with a 1.5 m advisory cycle lane which quickly diverts into a wide, 3 m shared-use cycleway and footway with priority over the four side roads. At Storey's Way there is a big, awkward diversion to cross on a hump set well back from the main road. But this is mainly so that cyclists can use it in both directions. In-bound cyclists can merge seamlessly with the road onto a cycle lane. There doesn't seem to be a way back onto the wide cycleway though, which is odd; but it is convenient for those turning right into Grange Road. There's a somewhat similar arrangement at Lady Margaret Road near the city end, but without priority on the path (no integration with the traffic lights either, so far as I can see) and the 3 m width on the verge continues right up to the roundabout at the Queen's Road junction.

Westbound the existing poor-quality shared-use path between town and Grange Road is retained but augmented by a 1.5 m advisory lane on the road west of Lady Margaret Road. There are advanced stop lines at the appropriate places. The lane continues, with red surfacing across side roads, all the way out to the Park & Ride site. Cyclists can also use the shared-use path on the north side to head out of town if they want, though there would be a problem getting off it at the out-of-town end.

The side-road priority is much better done here than in the Cherry Hinton Road proposals – much less deviation from the straight line, and well thought-out alternatives. This will be a fast route if well surfaced and will probably appeal to nearly all cyclists, even those who might normally want to use the road.

David Earl



The proposed Madingley Road cycleway will go a long way into Storey's Way (left) to use an existing hump - but there would be a lane on the road as well. Nothing is yet proposed for where the cycleway ends, at the mini-roundabout at Queen's Road (right).

Regulations regarding cycle lanes

Cambridge Cycling Campaign has long been concerned about the lack of enforcement of regulations regarding Mandatory Cycle Lanes and has recently written to Lord Adonis, the Secretary of State for Transport, asking that the relevant sections of the Traffic Management Act be enabled urgently. Below is a slightly edited version of the letter.

Dear Lord Adonis,

Regulations regarding Mandatory Cycle Lanes

We are writing regarding the enforcement of Mandatory Cycle Lanes (MCLs) and the relevant provisions in the Traffic Management Act 2004 ('the Act') which still have not been brought into force. We write to ask that as part of the publication of a new National Cycling (and active travel) Strategy, the relevant part of the Act be enabled swiftly.

Cambridge, as you'll be aware, has the highest levels of cycling of any local authority in the UK, and has significant distances of MCLs which should provide exclusive on-road routes for cyclists in otherwise congested spaces. Such cycle lanes can give cycling advantages over driving and make it a safe and pleasant mode of transport. The Highway Code is quite clear regarding such lanes, saying: 'You MUST NOT drive or park in a cycle lane marked by a solid line during its times of operation' (Rule 140).

Unfortunately such lanes are also providing penalty-free parking and unloading areas, as well as 'short cuts' for impatient motorists, owing to confusion over enforcement, lack of education, and hence low rates of compliance by drivers with Rule 140.

Part 4 of Schedule 7 of the Act provides for the decriminalisation of contraventions, both stationary and moving, when drivers fail to comply with traffic signs (contrary to section 36 of the Road Traffic Act 1988) for MCLs and some other cycle and pedestrian facilities. While decriminalised enforcement of bus lanes has been carried out for many years, and indeed has been extremely successful in improving bus services, we believe that this is the only part of the Act that has yet to be brought into force. We understand that the Statutory Instrument needed to do so has been drafted and is ready for public consultation.

These issues are complicated by lack of understanding of the current situation within the police. Many officers on the beat, and those in higher positions, either fail to understand the law or believe that issuing tickets for infringements of cycle lanes is now the responsibility of Civil Enforcement Officers under local authority parking enforcement. Until the provisions in the Act are enabled, we see no likelihood of higher levels of enforcement or compliance within Cambridge and the surrounding area. We believe we are not the only body frustrated by this issue, as the London Cycling Campaign and Campaign to Protect Rural England have both raised it with the Department.

In Cambridge, cycle lanes with flows of several thousands of cyclists per day are regularly obstructed by parked vehicles and delivery vans, some almost daily by the same vehicles. As someone who cycles himself, you will be aware that such obstructions turn cycle lanes into obstacle courses that can be worse than no facility at all. To make Cambridge and other cities safer and more pleasant places to cycle, such lanes need to be clear of obstructions, and not seen and treated as penalty-free parking and delivery areas for motor vehicles.

We ask that as part of the moves to a new National Cycle (and active travel) Strategy, the relevant part of the Act be enabled swiftly. Only when enforcement occurs regularly will compliance increase and routes be available for people to cycle. Hopefully, less confident people would then start cycling on these important routes, reducing motor vehicle congestion and increasing the health of Cambridge residents.

Yours sincerely, on behalf of Cambridge Cycling Campaign

Jim Chisholm

We ask that the relevant part of the Traffic Management Act regarding the enforcement of Mandatory Cycle Lanes be enabled swiftly

Mandatory cycle lanes in Cambridge provide penalty-free parking, unloading areas and 'short cuts' for impatient motorists due to lack of enforcement of the law.

Cycling along the busway

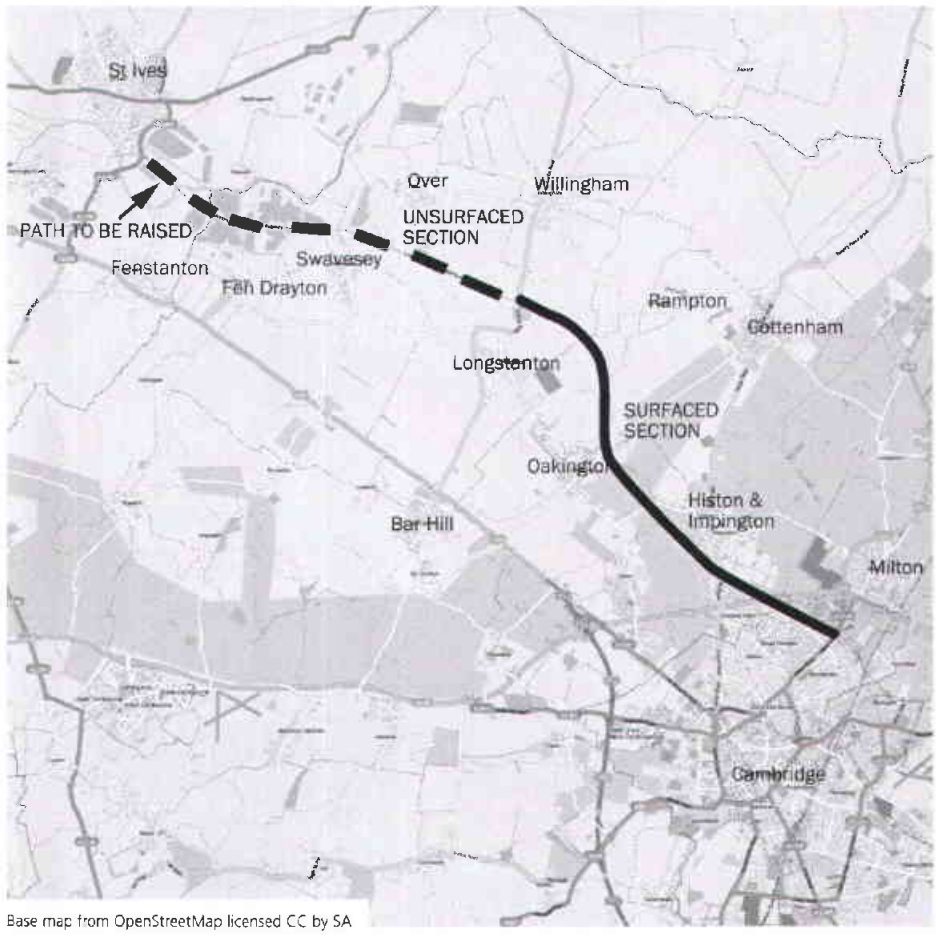
It seems a bit mean for people to be complaining about the cycleway from Milton to St Ives when it isn't even open yet.

Very soon now there really should be an off-road cycleway 4 m wide all the way from north Cambridge to St Ives, via the Regional College and Science Park, Histon, the new town at Northstowe, Longstanton and Swavesey. This will form one of the highest-quality cycleways in the area, if not the whole country.

It was rather unfortunate that the November opening date for the busway was announced before the contractors' work had been checked. Sadly, there were rather a lot of faults to be fixed, some quite serious, so it still isn't open. No doubt the wintry weather will not have helped in fixing these. That hasn't stopped people complaining already about the state of the cycleway alongside though! This does, however, show the level of interest there is in the new route: it has been accessible unofficially for some months now and is already being used extensively despite the work which remains to be done.

The section from Milton Road to Longstanton will be surfaced as soon as the County Council takes over the site from the contractors. Though west of Histon the surface is already reasonable, the section nearer Cambridge is a temporary surface and you cannot judge the quality of the route from what is there now. Once surfaced this will be an extremely fast route into north Cambridge. When a rail station is eventually built at Chesterton, the junction at Milton Road will be remodelled, making it easier to turn off the cycleway towards town. In the meantime, there is a shared-use cycleway which doesn't quite link up with the crossing near the Golden Hind, but is otherwise quite good.

The other problem that is immediately obvious to anyone who has tried it in this damp winter is the regular flooding between Swavesey and St Ives. We are assured that this is a fault which will be put right by the contractors before the route opens. Most of the flooding is caused by inadequate drainage, but the worst problem is between the Ouse bridge and the St Ives Park & Ride site where the cycleway has incorrectly been built below the level of the adjacent lake and inevitably fills with water. Indeed, this fault is one of the larger reasons why the busway has not yet opened.



Base map from OpenStreetMap licensed CC by SA

West of Longstanton the cycleway will not have a hard surface. Despite years of asking, the County Council has not agreed to surface it properly. It is pretty smooth as it stands, but the bad weather shows just how quickly it will deteriorate once the water gets at it. We can expect big gullies in it by next winter, I think. The problem is apparently one of drainage, or perhaps more precisely the Environment Agency's serious concerns about water run-off.

More links

I accompanied John Grimshaw of Cycling England (and Rohan Wilson for Sustrans) along the cycleway in December with a view to identifying where additional access might be needed for cyclists. As the County Council is providing the cycleway as part of its matched funding towards the Cycle Cambridge project, Cycling England has a serious interest in the quality of the provision here.

I think John, like myself, was rather favourably impressed by the route, notwithstanding the present problems.

There are a few links to villages which could do with improving. There is a particular need for a link to the Over to Longstanton road at Windmill Bridge: we are fairly confident that Cycling England can make this happen. Getting into Oakington on the road from Cottenham is a bit intimidating, but there is an alternative after a short way, so building a link there is desirable.

Bike racks are needed at the countryside stop in the lakes area east of the Ouse. We are told that the RSPB may provide some. Quite why the County Council can't is curious. They have everywhere else, with covered, well-lit and reasonably numerous Sheffield stands. Bike-and-ride from Swavesey should be a doddle for those who feel cycling it all is a bit far (though those people should try it – it is such easy and fast cycling that it may surprise them).

The section around Orchard Park (formerly Arbury Park) is also now completed and surfaced, so it is possible to avoid Kings Hedges Road and get to the Science Park and Regional College from Histon Road via the busway.

The high-quality cycleway along the route of the guided bus will be ready soon, but there are still problems with flooding between Swavesey and St Ives (top) and some sections still to be surfaced, as the short section past the Regional College has already been (bottom right). The Orchard Park section is complete (bottom centre). The Milton Road junction (bottom left) will eventually be remodelled when the Chesterton rail station is built.

Providing the teething troubles really are sorted out, the busway should provide 20 km of excellent, high-quality, fast and direct off-road cycleway of a standard never before seen in Cambridgeshire

In the south, the section from the railway station to Trumpington is nowhere near complete yet and it will be in the middle of development even when it is finished, as work on the Addenbrooke's overflow starts and Clay Farm (south of Long Road west of the railway) really gets going. Linking with the Cycle Cambridge scheme around the back of the Park & Ride site and over the M11, this will form a really good route from Harston to Addenbrooke's, the city and the station.

Providing the teething troubles really are sorted out, the busway should provide 20 km of excellent, high-quality, fast and direct off-road cycleway of a standard we have never experienced before.

David Earl

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Cycling Demonstration Towns: a progress report

John Grimshaw, famed as the founder of Sustrans and now technical advisor to Cycling England, addressed the Campaign's monthly meeting on 1 December 2009 to discuss progress with the country's Cycling Demonstration Towns. He began by congratulating us for being the premier cycling campaign in the 18 towns. Cycling England has had £140 million to spend over two and a half years to get more people cycling, more safely and more often (presumably a tip of the hat to our strapline: For better, safer and more cycling in and around Cambridge). The towns each received £500,000 funding per year (except for the smaller town of Aylesbury, which received £300,000 per year) from October 2005, amounting to £5 per capita, which was matched by the local authorities to reach the European average of £10 per capita, ten times the English average.

In November 2009 Cycling England produced a report (at www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/site/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/as-report-nov-2009.pdf) on the first six towns in Phase 1 of the project, which all showed a steady increase in cycling (compared to a broader decline in the rest of the UK, although on a par with London) and also an increase in physical activity. Cambridge has the highest level of cycling of the 18 cycling towns but it's feared that the increasing number of incomers with no tradition of cycling may lead to lower cycling rates, as has happened in Amsterdam. Cambridge did of course start building major cycling facilities long before Cycling Demonstration Towns had been invented, including the covered bridge at the station (and other fine bridges), a few cycle contraflows, and good (and also bad) examples of almost every other aspect of cycling provision. Cycling England is encouraging all cycling towns to make one-way streets two-way for cycling, backing our struggle in Cambridge for the DfT to allow 'Except Cycles' signs to be attached below 'No Entry' signs – which ended in success a month after this meeting! (See page 3 for details.) It also seems that Cycling England's funding for Cambridgeshire was contingent on good cycling links with the guided busway, which should fill us all with good cheer.

Cambridge started building major cycling facilities long before Cycling Demonstration Towns had been invented, including the covered bridge at the station.

All 18 Cycling Demonstration Towns showed a steady increase in cycling (compared to a broader decline in the rest of the UK)

Cycling rates up

Cycling England started by looking at cycling rates in various countries in 1996 (UK 2%, Sweden – much colder – 10%, Switzerland – much hillier – 15%). The aim then was to quadruple cycle use by 2012 – a target now forgotten. However, cycling rates in the first six demonstration towns (Aylesbury, Brighton & Hove, Darlington, Derby, Exeter and Lancaster with Morecambe) have been measured against a baseline sometime in 2005, and by March 2009 these had risen by between 10% and 57%, an average of 28% (6.2% per annum), i.e., the number of adults cycling for at least 30 minutes once or more per month rose from 11.8% of the population to 15.1%. Those who cycled for at least 30 minutes 12 times or more per month rose from 2.6% to 3.5%, an increase of 37%. Automated cycle counters are being used, including on off-road routes, but other counts are being held on just one single day, and survey points are rather odd in some places, being determined by the route of a river.

Schemes have been developed by the towns themselves, not by Cycling England, who encouraged them to look at facilities in continental Europe, where far more space is allocated to cyclists, most importantly with priority at junctions. Cycling England also asked them to look at who could be motivated to cycle and how. The target is non-cyclists (not cycle campaigners!) – how can people who don't cycle be persuaded to start pedalling? There's a stark division between those who insist on their right to ride on the roads and those who feel totally unsafe on the roads and want off-road provision at all points – but will they change their attitude once they are cycling regularly? Many people are hostile to cycle facilities because so many are of such poor quality and badly maintained, with broken glass, for instance, not being cleared; others may be good quality but lack lighting (Cycling England are trying out movement detectors for lights, among other initiatives).

In many towns (such as Bristol and Worcester) cyclists and pedestrians are almost invisible. Why? The government never tried to stop the decline in cycling in the 1950s and 1960s, when cars began to take over. In the 1950s the Labour Party was opposed to cycling in Cambridge (some would say, what's changed?). The CTC even campaigned against cycle routes in the 1960s. Was it because of the identification of cycling with backwardness, class linkages, poverty? Or because we had North Sea oil? At that time the government was very keen to promote the huge motor industry (whatever happened to that?). Countries like Denmark never had a car industry; nowadays most drivers there are also cyclists, and treat fellow cyclists well, whereas even in Cambridge, with all its cyclists, there is much aggression towards them from drivers. Most British traffic engineers still think their job is to deal with congestion and to keep motorised traffic moving; Cycling England has been running workshops with traffic engineers to open their eyes to the broader picture.

There's been a dramatic increase in obesity over the last ten years, which now costs as much as congestion, at least in the United States. Obviously getting people out of cars and onto bikes will have huge health benefits, and Cycling England now gets some money from the Department of Health. John Grimshaw feels that leisure cycling is the best way to get non-cyclists onto their bikes, but evidence is needed. He's also consistently amazed that we don't just look at Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, for example, and accept that high levels of cycling are a consequence of extensive networks of cycle routes such that you simply don't have to cycle on heavily trafficked roads. In Münster there are high-quality continuous cycle routes (including around the city's former moat) and cycling's modal share has increased from 29.2% to 37.6%, while walking has declined to 15.7% – and a fall in walking is something we should expect here as cycling rates rise. Dutch design guides also require segregated facilities where there are high vehicle flows or fast speeds. Here too we simply have to ensure that would-be cyclists have a choice of routes which they consider safe, starting by giving every town a traffic-free route to demonstrate to the authorities that the public will cycle if only they are given a chance. In Cambridge the genome route (from Shelford to Addenbrooke's) has raised the profile of cycling and is now used by 800 cyclists a day (and could be widened at little extra cost). Likewise, a new bridge in Lancaster led to cycle crossings of the river increasing from 443 to 1,114 a day. But there are, inevitably, some cock-ups, such as the new cycling bridge in Aylesbury where cycles can't fit into the lift (this wasn't deliberate but is still inexcusable).

John Grimshaw asked us what is a good cycle route? There were many different answers: a road, a route from A to B, a route where people feel safe, a continuous route, a red (or other colour) route. Cycling England's definition for cycling towns is 'a route which gives sufficient advantage to attract would-be cyclists', shorter, quicker, pleasanter than a car route – one which makes

Traffic-free routes, such as the genome route from Shelford to Addenbrookes, demonstrate to the authorities that the public will cycle if only they are given a chance. This route is now used by 800 cyclists a day.

Cycling needs to be integrated with the rest of the transport system, including better parking at stations.

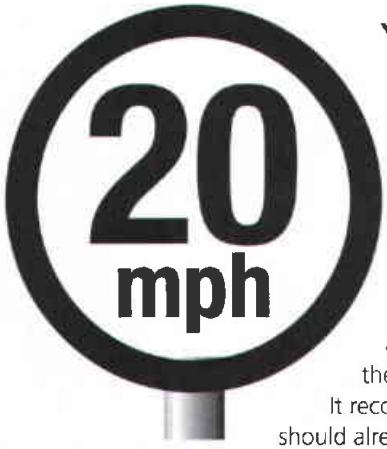
it clear that cyclists (and pedestrians) are valued travellers in the cycling town, in a modern town and in the 21st century. It can have many different components: lightly trafficked slow-speed roads; short cuts; attractive traffic-free sections through parks and so on, with reasonable priority at junctions, clear provision on main roads, permeability of town centres, convenient parking and clear signage. It was also suggested that cycling needs to be integrated with the rest of the transport system, including parking at stations etc., and that area-wide slow speeds help.

The Cycling Demonstration Town projects are clearly providing value for money – for every £1 spent, there's been a return of £2.59 through decreased mortality – but it takes a long time for an effective programme to get started, so investment must be sustained over the long term. At the moment Cycling England is only funded until next year (2011), and as a general election is due this year there is some uncertainty about its future. There's no doubt about the level of interest among local authorities (Cycling Towns phase two attracted 74 bids), but this has to be translated into commitment from central government.

The Cycling Demonstration Town projects are clearly providing value for money – for every £1 spent, there's been a return of £2.59 through decreased mortality, but investment must be sustained over the long term

Here in Cambridgeshire the County Council insists on only using images of cyclists wearing helmets, a policy which we deplore and are working to change. John Grimshaw's photos all showed ordinary cyclists in ordinary clothes and without helmets; according to him, helmets are restricting the promotion of cycling. Most European countries do not insist on cycle helmets.
We should be taking our senior councillors to Münster (or indeed Assen, where we have taken some cycling officers and others) so they can see what it is like there.

Edited by Tim Burford
from Monica Frisch's notes taken at the meeting



Yes we can!

In 2006 the Department for Transport issued new guidance on setting speed limits on local roads. For the first time this enabled local authorities to introduce significant areas of 20 mph limits without the need for traffic calming. It recommended that such areas should already have average speeds below 24 mph, but DID NOT rule out their introduction where speeds were higher, although it recommended that should speeds remain high, measures be taken to reduce them.

In Cambridgeshire, it was several years before the County Council adopted this new guidance, and it is only later this year that the first 20 mph zones under these new rules will be introduced.

From March 2008 one local authority, Portsmouth, bravely introduced 20 mph limits on a very significant number of residential roads including many where average speeds were over 24 mph.

Previous studies suggested that speed reductions of about 2 mph could be expected when 20 mph limits were introduced, but of course, under the pre-2006 guidance average speeds had to be low before introduction...

The first reports from the 'Portsmouth Experiment' were announced late last year, and average speeds on roads had dropped by some 2 mph, but many roads in the area already had average speeds of well under 24 mph. What was NEW is that on those roads where average speeds had been over 24 mph the AVERAGE speeds had been reduced by 7 mph.

In December 2009 the Department for Transport, quoting results from Portsmouth, proposed further revisions for the guidance on setting local speed limits, encouraging much wider use of 20 mph limits:

> Further benefits of 20 mph schemes include quality of life and community benefits, encouragement of healthier and more sustainable transport modes such as walking and cycling. There may also be environmental benefits, as generally, driving more slowly at a steady pace will save fuel and carbon dioxide emissions, unless an unnecessarily low gear is used.
>
> Based on this positive effect on road safety, and a generally favourable reception from local residents, we want to encourage highway authorities, over time, to introduce 20 mph zones or limits into streets which are primarily residential in nature; and into
>
> - town or city streets where pedestrian and cyclist movements are high, such as around schools, shops, markets, playgrounds and other areas;
> - where these are not part of any major through route.

The introduction of widespread 20 mph areas encourages more people to walk and cycle, increasing the independence of those too young or old to drive, yet studies in London suggest that crashes involving pedestrians and cyclists fall significantly despite their increased numbers.

Wouldn't such limits costs lots of money to introduce?

NO. By introducing a single traffic regulation order (TRO) over a very wide area, with a second TRO setting a 30 mph limit on main roads within the area, administrative costs can be vastly reduced. Of course, signs are required where limits change, and on some roads 'repeater' signs are required. Traffic calming on just two residential roads in Cambridge cost £75,000, whereas Portsmouth introduced 20 mph limits on 1,200 residential roads for less than £500,000.

Didn't the AA say that fuel consumption would be increased on such roads?

Yes, but that was 'bad science'. They quoted 'constant speed' figures for fuel consumption. Who could drive in either a 20 or 30 mph area at a constant speed? When figures for a typical 'urban cycle' are used, significant reductions in fuel and hence CO_2 are achieved in 20 mph areas.

Residential streets such as Oxford Road benefit from the pleasanter environment that results from lower speeds of motor vehicles.

Will it get widespread public support?

75% of people consider 20 mph right for residential roads – 72% of drivers also (British Social Attitudes Survey 2005).

30 kph (19 mph) limits have been in widespread use in many European countries for years, and it is to those limits that many attribute not only the higher levels of walking and cycling in those countries but also the reduced rates of injuries to walkers and cyclists.

The Department for Transport expects to confirm the new guidance on local speed limits in the next few months. We hope that Cambridgeshire County Council will adopt the new guidance as policy, and that residential streets and villages will thus benefit from the more pleasant environment that results from lower speeds of motor vehicles.

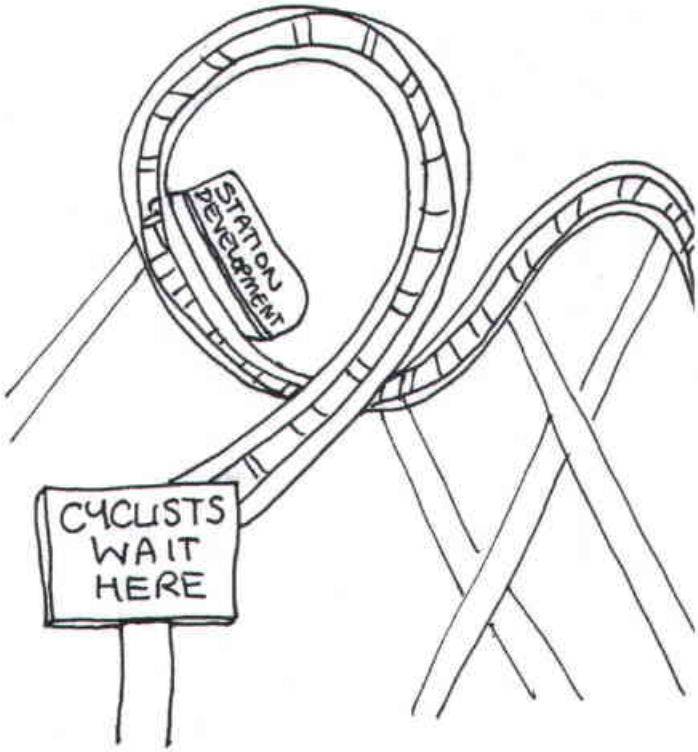
Jim Chisholm

References:

www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/roadsafety/speed-limits
(Update of guidance on setting local speed limits)

www.20splentyforus.org.uk
(20's plenty for us)

More station switchbacks



Progress towards improved facilities at Cambridge station can seem like a ride on Blackpool's Big Dipper. We've lots of ups and downs, and keep thinking the end is in sight, only to be confronted by yet more ups and downs.

A recent down has been Ashwells going into administration, and an up could be the provision of new island platforms with the possibility of a connection to Rustat Road.

The down (with ups)

Ashwells went into administration shortly before Christmas, putting the 'masterplan' in jeopardy. A phoenix company (Brookgate) quickly rose out of the ashes, meaning that developments of student accommodation for Anglia Ruskin University, for which finance is believed to be available, should be on track. This part of the development is integral with the link road from the Brooklands Avenue junction directly to the station (Cambridge Gateway), so hopefully links here scheduled for some time in 2011 should be secure.

Other commercial and residential developments look less secure, and without them prospects for vastly improved cycle parking, as in the original plans, are bleak. We hope there may be a solution to this on the horizon.

The ups (with downs)

Network Rail's 'Route Plan' for West Anglia says:
'2011 Cambridge new 12-car island platform and associated works' (see: www.networkrail.co.uk/aspx/4451.aspx).

Although there have long been aspirations for additional platforms, these are coming to rapid (by railway standards) fruition because of the Olympics. Increasing traffic has meant many 8-car trains are crowded at peak times, and as extra traffic can be expected by 2012, extra stock for 12-car trains has been ordered. This will be of little use if more 12-car trains cannot be run as far as Cambridge.

We gather that an island platform some 250 m long will be built off-centre slightly north of the existing platforms, with an overbridge connection to the existing station and the possibility of a link to Rustat Road. Disability requirements mean there must be a lift, but such lifts may not easily accommodate bikes.

Because Network Rail is a 'utility' there is no requirement for planning permission, although listed building consent will be required for alterations to any existing listed structures. Despite this exemption it is normal for there to be some consultation with stakeholders, but we are concerned that the shortened timescale may mean opportunities for revision are limited.

Such developments should be good news, not only because of reduced congestion and fewer delays for trains and passengers, but also because an additional access route from Rustat Road could reduce congestion at the existing entrance, and provide easy opportunities for bike parking on the east side.

We will need to push to ensure that the link to Rustat Road happens.

Other ups and downs

A quick count of cycles parked in November gave 1,295, yet the official figures via CTC from National Rail give the far smaller number of 333! There is clearly the need for better culling of dead cycles (is that a tautology?), but we are also working with others to see if extra cycle parking can be arranged. We also gather that some improved arrangements for dealing with double locked bikes are being negotiated.

Jim Chisholm

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Mill Road Winter Fair 2009

The closure of Mill Road for the first time proved popular (left) with attractions in 2009 (from top right) including our very own Cycling Campaign ambassadors, seen here with the stall bike; Morris dancing; and the 'unmissable' insect circus featuring 'trick cycling'.

This was the fourth time a Winter Fair had been held along Mill Road on the first Saturday of December. A decision was made fairly late on to close a stretch of Mill Road either side of the railway bridge between 10:30 am and 16:30 pm. The effect of the road closure was to make the whole event so much more relaxed and enjoyable than in previous years. Many people were asking why it can't be like that more often, or even all the time!

For most of the afternoon the bridge area was solid with pedestrians flowing along the street. Cyclists were included in the closure too, but some did continue to ride.

Your campaign stall was strongly supported by a dozen volunteers who worked in shifts to cover the event. Many people visited the stall to offer their support, thank us for what we're doing, and even to sign up as new members. The stall is an important public face of the campaign and it is a great way of finding out what are the issues of interest to cyclists (and non-cyclists) and those who wonder why Cambridge needs a cycling campaign. We'd like to run the stall more frequently, so if you are interested in helping do get in touch.

Simon Nuttall

800 letters on bikes

On a visit in November 2009 to commemorate Cambridge University's 800th anniversary, HM the Queen sealed the final archive box of a set of eight, each containing a hundred 'Letters to the Future' written by University staff, students, alumni, members of local community groups and representatives of over 80 higher education groups around the world. The boxes were then taken by the university's cycle messengers to the University Library, where they will be stored until the University's 900th anniversary in 2109, when they will be re-opened.

Campaign Diary

February

Tue 2	8.00pm	**Monthly General Meeting.** Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane (with tea and coffee from 7.30pm, and a chance to chat, and for us to introduce ourselves to new members).
Thu 4	5.30pm	**Newsletter 88 review meeting** at Grads Café on the top floor of the University Centre.
Sun 28		**Newsletter 89 deadline.** Please send copy to Monica Frisch: mfrisch@phonecoop.coop. Members are warmly invited to write articles (style guidelines available) and should contact the Editor in the first instance.

March

Tue 2	8.00pm	**Monthly General Meeting with speaker Amy Fleuriot of Cyclodelic (see details below).** Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane. For details, see 2 February.
Sat 20		**'Ride for Joy' fashion cycle ride.** See page 3 for more details.
Thu 25	7.30pm	**Newsletter envelope stuffing.** Baby Milk Action offices, 34 Trumpington Street. Help very much welcomed.

April

Thu 1	5.30pm	**Newsletter 89 review meeting.** For details, see 28 February.
Tue 6	8.00pm	**Monthly General Meeting.** Friends' Meeting House, Jesus Lane. For details, see 2 February.

EVERY FRIDAY — **LUNCHTIME RIDES, 12.30 pm (weather permitting)**
Lunchtime rides of varying speed and length, usually involving a stop at a pub on the way, leaving from the Stourbridge Common side of Green Dragon Bridge. Open to all who like to ride and talk about bicycles. Join the ride at your own risk.

March meeting: Amy Fleuriot of Cyclodelic

Amy Fleuriot developed the concept of Cyclodelic while a student at the London College of Fashion, producing accessories for urban riders and selling them through independent London bicycle stores. She continues to run the business from her studio in East London where she now also meticulously dreams up fun, creative events to encourage more people into cycling. Today Cyclodelic continues to combine thousands of miles of pedalling experience with the simple goal of creating beautiful clothing, accessories and events for women who don't want to forfeit fashion over function when arriving by bike.

Find out more by coming to the March monthly meeting where Amy Fleuriot will be speaking and displaying some of her products.

City and County Council committees

Campaign members may be interested to attend **Planning Committee and Area Committee** meetings, which often include cycling and walking issues.

Joint Development Control Committee meetings, which are determining the Planning Applications relating to the huge major housing development proposals for the Cambridge sub-region, are also open to the public.

Cambridge Cycling Campaign studies and comments upon agendas and papers for **Cambridge Traffic Management Area Joint Committee** meetings, and these meetings are also open to the public.

Details of the venue and the agenda are available about a week before each meeting at www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/councillors/comtabl10.htm

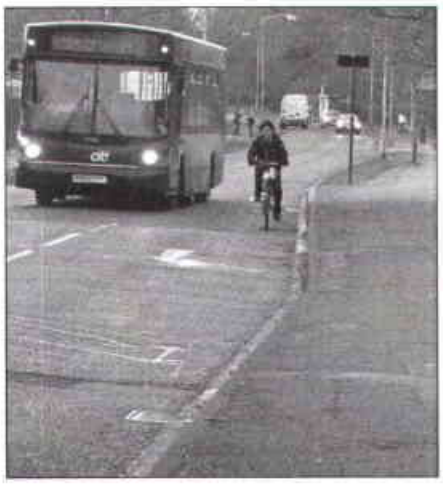
FEBRUARY 2010

Thur 4	7.30 pm	West/Central Area Committee
Wed 10	9.30 am	Planning Committee
Thur 18	7.00 pm	East Area Committee
Wed 24	10.00 am	Joint Development Control Committee

MARCH 2010

Thur 4	6.30 pm	North Area Committee
Wed 10	9.30 am	Planning Committee
Thur 11	7.00 pm	South Area Committee
Wed 24	10.00 am	Joint Development Control Committee

YOUR STREETS THIS MONTH



Consultations are now underway on proposed improvements to cycleways on Cherry Hinton Road, Madingley Road, The Tins and Gilbert Road (clockwise from top left).

City cycleway improvements

The Cycle Cambridge team at the County Council is now consulting on some long-awaited improvements within Cambridge, as part of the Cycling Demonstration Town programme. Crucially this includes improvements to Gilbert Road, in particular removal of the car parking, which we strongly recommend members to support. The information below is taken from the County Council's website (www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/projects/cambridge/) where plans of the proposals can be found.

Cherry Hinton Road

Facilities for cyclists have been reviewed in detail to see what improvements could be made. Owing to the relative narrowness of the road, it is not realistic to have on-road cycle lanes on both sides of the road. The proposals involve improvements to the shared-use off-road cycle route.

Madingley Road

The team has been looking at improving the provision for cyclists with a combination of on-road and off-road cycle paths. From Queens' Road to Storey's Way the existing off-road shared-use path will be widened. From Storey's Way to the Park & Ride there will be a combination of on-road and off-road paths, as the width of the road varies considerably.

The Tins

Discussions are currently taking place regarding the purchase of land to widen the route on one side or the other. From initial surveys the most likely improvement will be to the north side.

Gilbert Road

The proposal is to introduce traffic-calming measures and improve the cycle lanes along Gilbert Road.

See page 4 for more on these proposals.

Local Transport Plan consultation

The County Council is about to start the consultation process for the Local Transport Plan so that what money there is will be spent on what the public want (paraphrasing Councillor Roy Pegram when interviewed on Radio Cambridgeshire). Details of the consultation, which runs until 9 April, including dates of exhibitions, are on its website (www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/transport/strategies/local/).

Devonshire Road narrowed

Because of hoardings around the building next to the Youth Hostel in Devonshire Road, the width of the carriageway has been reduced by about a third. Surprisingly, there are no signs warning of the hazard, nor are there any lights on the hoardings. So watch out.

Potholes

The winter weather is causing damage to road surfaces, so beware of new potholes and please report them at www.fillthathole.org.uk